



OBAMA-SINGH 21ST CENTURY KNOWLEDGE INITIATIVE (OSI)

Request for Proposal

Summary

The United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF) announces an open competition for the support of projects through the Obama-Singh 21st Century Knowledge Initiative (OSI). Announced by the U.S. and Indian governments, OSI aims to strengthen collaboration and build partnerships between American and Indian institutions of higher education. Accredited U.S. post-secondary educational institutions meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 U.S.C. 501©(3) may submit proposals to support the program's goals of encouraging mutual understanding, facilitating educational reform, fostering economic development, and engaging civil society through academic cooperation with Indian post-secondary educational institutions, in the thematic areas of energy; sustainable development; climate change; environmental studies; education and educational reform; public health; and community development and innovation. Proposals are due November 1, 2012.

Program Overview

To encourage mutual understanding, facilitate educational reform, foster economic development, and engage civil society, the OSI enables U.S. colleges and universities and Indian counterpart institutions to pursue objectives cooperatively through exchange visits of faculty, administrators, post graduate Indian students, and U.S. graduate students who can demonstrate the ability to work independently. The OSI is not designed to specifically support study abroad activities for undergraduate students but does encourage the development of education abroad programs for U.S. undergraduate students.

Project Design

The project should be designed to focus on specific institutional objectives that will support the program's goals of encouraging mutual understanding, facilitating educational reform, fostering economic development, and engaging civil society. The project design should include a series of exchange visits and activities that will lead to the achievement of the project's objectives within a three-year period, and should describe a process for evaluating the results of project implementation. The design should also provide for the effective administration of the project.

Statement of Mutual Benefit and Support of OSI Goals

To justify a request for support, proposals must demonstrate how the project will mutually benefit the participating institutions and support OSI goals and achieve results. Proposals should explain how each participating department and institution will utilize the project to mutually benefit both institutions' needs as well as larger needs in the country and society of the U.S. and India.

Accordingly, applicants should describe the needs and deficiencies as well as the capabilities and strengths of the U.S. department and institution, and how each institution will contribute to, and benefit from, the achievement of project objectives and OSI goals. Proposals must realistically assess institutional capacities and contain compelling objectives that address institutional needs and justify a request for support. To be competitive, proposals should demonstrate that the participating institutions are committed to mutual support and cooperation in project implementation.

If the proposed partnership would occur within the context of a previous or ongoing project, the proposal should outline distinct objectives and outcomes for the new project and should explain how new funding would build upon the previously funded activities. Proposals should describe the amounts and sources of support for the earlier projects as well as the results to date.

Project Objectives

Proposals should explain in detail how the project will enable the participating institutions to achieve specific institutional or departmental changes that will support the goals of the OSI. Proposals should outline a series of activities for meeting specific objectives for each participating institution and society. The benefits of the project to each of the participating institutions may differ significantly in nature and scope based on their respective needs and resource bases.

Project objectives may include the development or revision of courses, curricula, and programs of study at participating institutions to support mutual understanding, educational reform, economic development, or civil society. Particular areas of interest include Indian junior faculty development programs and the engagement of U.S. community colleges with Indian vocational and technical educational institutions.

Proposals may outline the parameters and possible content of new courses; new teaching specializations or pedagogic methodologies; collaborative research; new or revised curricula; and new programs for outreach to educators, professional groups, or the general public. Proposals may also describe strategies to promote administrative reform through faculty or staff development.

In most cases a limited number of related thematic objectives at each institution will be more feasible to achieve than a larger number of unrelated objectives.

The following fields are eligible:

- Energy
- Sustainable Development

- Climate Change
- Environmental Studies
- Education and Educational Reform
- Public Health
- Community Development and Innovation

Exchange Activities and Project Implementation

Proposals should demonstrate that a project's objectives are feasible to achieve within a three-year period through a series of exchange activities that take into account prevailing conditions in the United States and India. Exchange activities may include but are not limited to curriculum design, research collaboration, team teaching, focused series of exchanges, seminars, among other activities. Activities should be designed to develop expertise, advance scholarship and teaching, and promote reliable, long-term communication between partner institutions.

For example, projects focusing on curricular reform should describe the existing curriculum and the courses targeted for revision, and should explain how exchange activities will result in the restructuring of the current content to incorporate the new academic themes. The proposal should describe the topics and content of any new courses or educational materials that will be developed and introduced, and should identify those persons who will be responsible for developing the new courses and for teaching them.

If the project proposes to develop a new degree or certificate program, the proposal should outline the steps being taken to secure approval for the new program from the institution itself and from all relevant educational authorities. The proposal should also describe the composition and size of the student and faculty population and any other group that will benefit from the innovations to be introduced through the project.

Except for translators, interpreters, and outside evaluators, participation in the exchange visits is limited to teaching faculty, researchers, Indian graduate students, U.S. graduate students, and administrators from the participating institution(s). Graduate students are eligible to participate in exchange visits if they have teaching or research responsibilities or are preparing for such responsibilities.

The grant recipient is responsible for providing invitation letters for Indian participants applying for a U.S. visa. The grant recipient is also responsible for issuing the DS-2019 for Indian participants and assisting U.S. based participants in obtaining appropriate Indian visas.

Material and Technical Support for Exchange Activities

To increase the feasibility and impact of the project's exchange activities, a proposal may include a request for funding for educational materials (including books and periodical subscriptions) and technical components (including the establishment or maintenance of Internet and/or electronic mail facilities and of interactive technology-based distance-learning programs). The funding requested for educational materials and technical components should supplement the project's exchange activities by reinforcing their impact on project objectives. Applicants may propose other project components not

specifically mentioned in this solicitation document if the activities will increase the impact on project objectives.

Project Duration

Pending the availability of funds, selected grant recipients are expected to enter into grant status before August 31, 2012. Grant activities are expected to be completed within the three-year timeframe.

Project Evaluation

Proposals should describe and budget a methodology for project evaluation. Institutions that are awarded partnership grants must formally submit periodic reports to USIEF on the project's activities in relation to its objectives. The formal evaluation reports should include an assessment of the current status of each participating department's and institution's needs at the time of program inception with specific reference to project objectives; formative evaluation to allow for mid-course revisions in the implementation strategy; and, at the conclusion of the project, summative evaluation of the degree to which the project's objectives have been achieved. The proposal should discuss how the issues raised throughout the formative evaluation process will be assessed and addressed. The summative evaluation should describe the project's influence on the participating institutions and their surrounding communities or societies. The summative evaluation should also include recommendations about how to build upon project achievements. Copies of evaluation reports must be provided to USIEF.

In addition to the formally scheduled reports, the evaluation strategy should include a mechanism for promptly providing USIEF with information to be able to summarize and illustrate project activities and achievements as they occur.

Project Administration

Proposals should explain how project activities will be administered both in the U.S. and India in ways that will ensure that the project maintains a focus on its objectives while adjusting to changing conditions, assessments, and opportunities.

The recipient and any sub-recipient must, in addition to the assurances and certifications made as part of the award, comply with all applicable terms and conditions during the project period as stated in the Standard Overseas Terms and Conditions, which is available online at http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/Content/documents/Overseas_TandC.pdf.

Institutional Commitment

A U.S. college or university must submit the proposal and must serve as the grant recipient with responsibility for project coordination. Proposals must include letters of commitment from all institutional partners including the institution submitting the proposal. Each letter must be signed by an official who is authorized to commit institutional resources to the project. The letters of support as well as the proposal as a whole should clearly demonstrate that the participating institutions are committed to mutual support and cooperation in project implementation.

Eligible Institutions

The lead institution and grant recipient in the project must be an accredited U.S. college or university, meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 U.S.C. 501 ©(3).

Applications from community colleges, institutions serving significant minority populations, undergraduate liberal arts colleges, comprehensive universities, research universities, and combinations of these institutions are eligible. The lead U.S. organization in a consortium or other combination of cooperating institutions is responsible for submitting the application. Each application must document the lead organization's authority to represent all U.S. cooperating partners. Secondary U.S. partners may include governmental or non-governmental organizations at the federal, state, or local levels as well as non-profit service, community, and professional organizations.

Note: USIEF will only accept one proposal per institution. Institutions that have received an OSI grant in the past are not eligible to apply again.

Indian institutional partners may be recognized institutions of post-secondary education, state-supported universities, independent universities, and research institutes. Secondary Indian partners may include governmental or non-governmental organizations at the federal, state, or local levels as well as non-profit service, community, and professional organizations.

Costs and Cost-Sharing

The commitment of all partner institutions to the proposed project should be reflected in the cost-sharing which they offer in the context of their respective institutional capacities. Although the contributions offered by institutions with relatively few resources may be less than those offered by applicants with greater resources, all participating institutions should identify appropriate contributions. Proposed cost-sharing will be considered an important indicator of the applicant institution's commitment to the project.

OSI support may be used to assist with the costs of the exchange visits as well as the costs of the administration of the project by the U.S. grantee institution. U.S. administrative costs that may be covered by the OSI, with certain limitations, include administrative salaries, faculty replacement costs, other direct administrative costs, and indirect costs. Any secondary U.S. federal agency partner contributions cannot be considered for cost sharing. The cost of administering the project at the Indian partner organization(s) is also eligible for OSI support. Although each grant will be awarded to a single U.S. institutional partner, the proposal should make adequate provision for the administrative costs of all partner institutions, including the Indian partner(s).

The maximum award in the FY 2012 competition will be \$250,000 for a three-year period. Requests for amounts smaller than the maximum are eligible. Budgets and budget notes should carefully justify the amounts requested.

Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American and Indian political, social, and cultural life. “Diversity” should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, caste, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and physical challenges. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content.

Review Process

USIEF will acknowledge receipt of all proposals and will review them for technical eligibility. All eligible proposals will be evaluated by independent external reviewers, who will be professional, scholarly, or educational experts with appropriate regional and thematic knowledge. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein.

Review Criteria

All reviewers will use the criteria below to reach funding recommendations and decisions. Special consideration will also be given to proposals from U.S. community colleges that promote the development of the comparable technical and vocational education sectors in India. Technically eligible applications will be reviewed competitively according to these criteria, which are not rank-ordered or weighted.

(1) Broad and Enduring Significance of Institutional Objectives: Project objectives should have significant and ongoing impact on the participating institutions and their surrounding societies, communities, or countries and foster a deepened understanding of critical issues in one or more of the eligible fields. Special consideration will be given to proposals which include Indian junior faculty development as a component of the grant activity.

(2) Feasibility and Effectiveness of Strategy to Achieve Project Objectives: Strategies to achieve project objectives should be feasible and realistic within the projected budget and timeframe. Proposals should contain detailed information on specific exchange activities and outline the methodology and timeframe for achieving project goals.

(3) Institutional Commitment to Cooperation: Proposals should demonstrate significant understanding by each institution of its own needs and capacities and of the needs and capacities of its proposed partner(s), together with a strong commitment by the partner institutions, during and after the period of grant activity, to cooperate with one another in the mutual pursuit of institutional objectives.

(4) Project Evaluation: Proposals should describe a methodology for determining the degree to which a project meets its objectives, both while the project is underway and at its conclusion. The final project evaluation should provide observations about the project’s influence within the participating institutions as well as their surrounding communities or societies.

(5) Cost-effectiveness: Administrative and program costs should be reasonable and appropriate with cost-sharing provided by all participating institutions within the context of their respective capacities. Cost-sharing is viewed as a reflection of institutional commitment to the project. Contributions should not be limited to indirect costs.

(6) Support of Diversity: Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of diversity by explaining how issues of diversity are included in project objectives for all institutional partners. Issues resulting from differences of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, caste, religion, geography, socio-economic status, or physical challenge should be addressed during project implementation. In addition, project participants and administrators should reflect the diversity within the societies, which they represent. Proposals should also discuss how the various institutional partners approach diversity issues in their respective communities or societies.

For additional information, please email OSI@usief.org.in.